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INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 9642
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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 4273
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0870
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 6601
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 5459
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000042

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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: ISLAMABAD 3533

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) Summary: Political developments in Pakistan during the week of January 5 included: the main Baloch insurgent groups called an end to their voluntary and tenuous cease-fire with the Pakistani military; President Zardari announced his plan to reform and restructure the National Accountability Bureau to stop its alleged use for political revenge; and former Chief Minister of Sindh and Sindh National Front leader Mumtaz Ali Bhutto was arrested for his alleged involvement in an attack on a newspaper office. End Summary.

BALUCH CEASEFIRE BROKEN

12. (C) The tenuous cease-fire established in September 2008 between the Pakistani military and the three main Baloch insurgent groups dissolved with renewed tensions in Sui and other natural gas-rich areas. The three insurgent groups, the Baloch Liberation Army, the Baloch Liberation Front, and the Baloch Republican Army, last year had, in response to outreach from Interior Minister Rehman Malik, agreed not to attack the Pakistani military in exchange for the GOP's promise to keep the military in restricted locations. (See Reftel.)

13. (C) On January 5 the joint spokesman for the insurgents, Mir Beburg Baloch, announced that the unilateral cease-fire was officially over because of the government's unwillingness to grant the Baloch rights to their natural resources and because of the government's frequent violations of the cease-fire. The spokesman said that the GOP used the last few months to fortify military installations and expand the army presence in Balochistan- in contravention of the cease-fire. After the latest clash on January 1 between the military and insurgents in the Sui and Dera Bugti areas killed over 50 people, including Baloch civilians, Beburg said that the insurgents would no longer trust Rehman Malik. The government cited the insurgents' continued gas pipeline bombings as the basis for an increased military presence in Sui, Kohlu, and Kahan.

RESTRUCTURING THE NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY BUREAU

14. (C) President Zardari and Law Minister Farooq Naek announced on January 6 that the government would restructure

the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). NAB, created by Musharraf in 1998, is Pakistan's highest anti-corruption organization and it is charged with investigating and prosecuting most white-collar crimes. However, NAB has often been used to pursue politically motivated and false cases, including some corruption cases against both Zardari and Gilani. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government has yet to release the operational funds for the NAB and it has moved some of its investigative powers to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). In a further attempt to reform the NAB, President Zardari announced that the next NAB chairman would be a retired Supreme Court judge, and not someone from the armed services or law enforcement. The NAB will remain a state institution and report to the President vice the Prime Minister, thus any changes to the NAB would be undertaken via ordinance rather than through an act of parliament. President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani publicly said they want to "humanize" the NAB and stop its use as a tool for political revenge. Also, they plan to exempt parliamentarians from NAB jurisdiction and leave this function to the Parliament.

ARREST OF MUMTAZ BHUTTO

15. (C) On January 3, police arrested former Sindh chief minister and Sindh National Front (SNF) Chairman Mumtaz Ali Bhutto for his alleged involvement in attacks on a Sindhi language newspaper's office. Bhutto is the first cousin of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Mumtaz has

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largely been estranged from the family of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto after Mumtaz tried to propose marriage to Zulfiqar's widow during her mourning period. Mumtaz reportedly wrote a fiery editorial criticizing the government that local paper "Awami Awaz" refused to print. The police allege that Mumtaz Bhutto organized an attack on the newspaper's office for its refusal to print his editorial. Sindh Home Minister Zulfiqar Mirza, husband of National Assembly Speaker Dr. Fehmida Mirza, had Mumtaz arrested from his home in Larkana and flown to Karachi where he was taken to the hospital due to an unknown illness. The arrest has sparked protests in Larkana and condemnation from several political parties, including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Sharif. Mumtaz has been released on bail and is awaiting trial.

PATTERSON